

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**

**Faculty of Economics and Management**

**Department of Humanities**



**Bachelor Thesis**

**Political Economy and Social Movements: The Fight for  
\$15 Movement**

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# CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

## BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Aleksandr Chirkovskii

Economics and Management

Thesis title

**Political Economy and Social Movements: The Fight for \$15 Movement**

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### Objectives of thesis

This thesis will take the form of a case study of the recent 'Fight for \$15' movement in the United States, which since 2012 has campaigned for a \$15 minimum wage, and has gained the support of various politicians and civil society groups. The thesis will involve a political economic analysis of the movement, drawing on contemporary literature in social movement studies that studies the economic motivations, tactics and impacts of social movements. The thesis will thus consider the economic conditions that gave rise to the movement, the values and motivations of its participants, how it attempts to use economic power and influence, and what impacts it has had. The research will be conducted through comparative documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources related to the movement.

### Methodology

The thesis will develop a literature review covering debates in social movement theory, with a particular focus on political economic questions and frameworks. The practical part will involve a comparative analysis of publicly available materials, consisting of primary and secondary documents from the Fight for \$15 movement, including campaign statements and official documents, media reports, and statements by public figures.

**The proposed extent of the thesis**

40-50 pages

**Keywords**

Social Movements, Political Economy, Fight for \$15, Minimum Wage, Trade Unions

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**Recommended information sources**

- GIUGNI, Marco and GRASSO, Maria T. (2019). 'The Economic Outcomes of Social Movements'. In The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements. London: Wiley Blackwell.
- LATHROP, Yannet, LESTER, T. William, and WILSON, Matthew. (2021). Quantifying the Impact of the Fight for \$15. Report of National Employment Law Project. Available at:  
<https://www.nelp.org/publication/quantifying-the-impact-of-the-fight-for-15-150-billion-in-raises-for-26-million-workers-with-76-billion-going-to-workers-of-color/>
- STANLEY, Jason and GOODWIN, Jeff. (2013). 'Political Economy and Social Movements', in The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements, London: Wiley Blackwell.

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## **Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "Political Economy and Social Movements: The Fight for \$15 Movement" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 11/03/2022

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### **Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank Ph.D. Daniel Swain for help in writing this paper, including helpful advice and assistance in finding useful literature.

# **Political Economy and Social Movements: The Fight for \$15 Movement**

## **Abstract**

This thesis was created in order to analyse the "Fight for 15\$" movement, which protesting for raising the minimum wage for workers in industries that receive salaries on the level of minimum wages in the United States. The analysis of the movement will be providing by comparative analysis of documents of primary and secondary types of sources, and through the investigation I will identify their ideology, impact on the economy, as well as the impact on the political arena in the United States. The documents and that will be used in the analysis are newspaper articles, articles about the "Fight For 15\$" social movement, and articles that talk about the minimum wage.

**Keywords:** Social Movements, Political Economy, Fight for \$15, Minimum Wage, Trade Unions

# **Politická ekonomie a sociální hnutí: Boj za hnutí za 15 dolarů**

## **Abstrakt**

Tato práce byla vytvořena za účelem analýzy hnutí „Boj za 15 \$“, které protestuje za zvýšení minimální mzdy pro pracovníky v odvětvích, které pobírají platy na úrovni minimálních mezd ve Spojených státech. Analýza hnutí bude provedena komparativní analýzou dokumentů primárních a sekundárních typů zdrojů a prostřednictvím šetření identifikují jejich ideologii, dopad na ekonomiku a také dopad na politickou scénu ve Spojených státech. Dokumenty, které budou použity v analýze, jsou novinové články, články o sociálním hnutí „Boj za 15 \$“ a články, které hovoří o minimální mzdě.

**Klíčová slova:** Sociální hnutí, politická ekonomie, „Boj za 15 \$“, minimální mzda, odbory

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# 1 Introduction

Work is a daily activity for most people throughout their lives. For many, work is just a pleasure that has grown out of a hobby, but most often people work for the sake of money in order to afford all the benefits that humanity gives us in the 21st century. However, what if the money that is paid at work is so minimal that it is not even enough for basic needs such as paying electricity bills or buying food for your family?

Thus, if people are dissatisfied with something, or something unites them, they gather in social movements, one of which we will consider in this research. Social movements are quite common, they can be found in many parts of our society as well as the types of achievement of the goals of these movements vary greatly, depending on their type. It is exactly the reason why I decided to consider the ‘fight for \$ 15’ movement.

The fight for 15\$ is a social movement that unites the goal of raising the US minimum wage because they believe their minimum wage doesn't even allow them to survive, which could mean it's the government's fault in planning for an objective minimum wage, so we will look at this movement, their ideology, activities and successes as well as how political economics will help us to explore this movement better.

## **2 Objectives and Methodology**

### **2.1 Objectives**

The main objective of this thesis is to investigate the ‘Fight for 15\$’ movement and to analyze their job, their success in achieving their primary goal, their impact on economics and ideologies through political economic analysis by using academic literature as well as analysis of secondary resources related to this movement.

### **2.2 Methodology**

This dissertation presents a review of the scientific papers, books, articles and news on social movements with the focus on political economics. In the practical part, a comparative analysis will be made on the basis of the literature, explaining key characteristics of the ‘Fight for 15\$’ movement in more detail.

## **3 Literature Review**

### **3.1 Social Movement definition**

Since I study social movements, I would like to learn more about social movements and to get a general idea of what stands behind every social movement. First of all, I determine the term of ‘social movement’ based on Jonathan Christiansen work (2009). According to the author, the social movement stands between the political movement, which has access to power to solve problems and massive hobbies than either, which, although it differs in massiveness, but does not allocate organized and most often disappears. That is, socially movement is an organized (but informal) group of people who are combined with any idea among themselves and account for the fulfillment of goals, for example, if they are involved in any conflict.

#### **3.1.1 Collective Behavior**

Before disassembling and analyzing the social movement, I decided to delve into the topic of social movements, because social movements and collective behaviors are too vast in a way that there is a huge number of characteristics and terms, therefore, firstly, I breakdown the idea of collective behaviors, social movements and their classifications for further study of the topic.

What is a collective behavior and how does it differ from social movements?

It is not a simple question to answer, because the term ‘collective behavior’ has a vast number of terms. However, they all fall under a specific definition that I provide. Collective behavior is a doctrine of the crowd and its properties such as panic or a disaster, something spontaneous that can arise out of nowhere are thoughts of Charles Tilly or, for example, as Crossman says it’s something that expresses fashion or public opinion. In contrary, all of these have one thing in common - lack of assembly and emergence almost from nowhere, that is, sudden appearance. (Dr. David Imhonop, Dr. Comfort Adenike Onifade and Ugochukwu Moses Urim, 2013) Collective behavior is divided into crowds which are in turn divided into 4 other types that are greatly described in William Little's book (2016):

- 1) Casual crowd is just a certain number of people who do not have the same views, but met together, such as the queue at the grocery store.
- 2) Usual crowd is people who came to the same place for the sake of one planned event, as an example, you can take people going to the theater
- 3) Expressive crowd is described as people who gather in a place for whom an event evokes one emotion, for example, some kind of holiday
- 4) Acting crowd means that people gather for the sake of committing a particular goal. A riot a perfect example and suits best to the explanation of acting crowd

Moreover, there are 2 classifications of Mass and Public also given in the book:

- Mass is a large number of people who may not know each other. They share a passion for some common idea that unites them into a mass. An example of mass is fans of a music band or a show
- Public is an unorganized group of people who are united by any idea, for example, the ideas of Marx

The question of why the terminology of collective behavior was presented may arise for a reason, thus as I assume it shows the difference between collective behavior and social movements properties. Considering collective behavior as one without spirit of cohesion and absence of precise organizational basis for actions, this is how it differs from social movements.

### **3.1.2 Types of Social Movements**

There are various classifications of social movements exist, however, only 4 of them are taken into account and explained in more detail. In his essay, Simone I. Flynn identifies and explains certain types of social movements which, basically, are Alternative, Redemptive, Reform and Transformational movements. Each of them is broken down below:

- 1) Alternative movements. The structure of this movement is expressed in opposition to generally accepted cultural values. The goal is to develop in the direction of their own special way of life which is different from those accepted in society
- 2) Redemptive movements. The purpose of this type of movement is to influence the world and change it with the help of provocations on a person
- 3) Reform movements. Most often with a positive context and seek to promote any ideas to the world that can affect the entire population, for example, goals can be to solve problems with inequality
- 4) Transformational movements. This kind of movements seeks to make an impact on the whole world, but, unlike the reform movements, violent actions and tough politics of their decisions might be used to prove something

The classification above seems to be the broadest among other classifications I observed and basically describes the major idea of movements in a better way, whereas, the classification of other authors may change dramatically, hence this classification was chosen.

### **3.1.3 Four Stages Of Social Movements**

After considering the types of social movements, it is necessary to dive into the topic of "life and death" of the social movements. What it means is actually that this part explains what stages the movement goes through from its origin to its ascent and later to the end. These 4 stages were first identified by Herbert Bloomer, he singled out what stages the social movement goes through - these stages were called as follows: "social fermentation", "social excitement", "formalization" and "institutionalization", but, referring to the article by Jonathan Christiansen (2009), it turned out that these stages were slightly rewritten and renamed and became known as Emergence, Consolidation, Bureaucratization and Decline.

- 1) The Stage of Emergency. This is a preliminary stage of a social movement, one can even say such a movement stage does not exist, that is characterized by the fact that general discontent is growing among a group of people. You may also

notice that if there are any actions at this stage, they are very chaotic, not organized and can be characterized by dissatisfaction in social networks

- 2) Unification Stage. This stage shows that the cause of people's dissatisfaction becomes clear, it is known who or what is to blame for a problem. People become more irritated by problems. At this stage, they are forming groups and cease to be just dissatisfied people. Additionally, leadership is also formed at this stage, whilst participants begin to realize that there are other people with similar views. Rallies are probable too
  
- 3) Stage of Bureaucratization reveals certain successes of social movements. Activists' actions become coordinated and accurate. Things other than rallies appear in the arsenal of the movement and can be related as "dawn" of the social movements. This stage is particularly characterized by the fact that the movement is most likely in contact with political figures and they already have to be reckoned with
  
- 4) Decline Stage. This is the last stage of life of a social movement, however, the word decline does not always mean that a social movement is destined to fail in the end. Speaking further, 4 types of paths are indicated (Christiansen, 2009) when the movement comes to decline. These are repression, co-optation, success and failure that are explained further:
  - Repression means that the authorities will repress the movement. The legality of the repressions may remain in question, however, most likely, according to the views of the participants in the movement, they will be considered as illegal, so the movement dies from repressions and gets under control by the authorities. Sometimes repressions can even lead to violation
  - Co-optation can lead to both decline and vice versa, it all depends on the leader of the movement. Imagining, the leader of the movement is given the opportunity to work on the problem "from the inside" where 2 endings as possible. On the one hand, the leader will actually fix the problem or, on the other hand, he will accept the values and ideas of the system he has entered.

There is a chance of bribing the leader of the movement after which the movement will begin to disintegrate

- Success would mean that the people achieved their intended goals and they could not be influenced by the authorities or other third-party organizations
- Failure. The movement falls apart, because it failed to meet organizational responsibilities or, for instance, the rapid growth of the movement might impact the outcome in a way the movement may get out of organizational control
- Besides, there is a fifth scenario of the development of events which is called Merging with the Mainstream, meaning that the social movement is disintegrating, because its ideology has entered the mainstream (goals achieved and the result is accepted by the crowd) to such extent that the need for movement is no longer required.

Based on the determined stages of social movements we are capable of guessing what can lead to a social movement. It provides a clearer vision and comprehension of what stage the movement is at, what adversities may occur along the way and what it can achieve if it overcomes all stages.

### **3.1.4 Theories Of Social Movements**

On a basis of the previous classifications and types of social movements, I consider particular theories of social movements that will help to better understand the internal processes of social movements. The Interdisciplinary Theory of Social Movements consists of Value Added Theory, Structural Deformation Theory, Relative Deprivation Theory, Resource Mobilization Theory and Mass Society Theory (Christiansen, 2009).

- 1) Resource Mobilization Theory. This theory was proposed in the 1970s and shows us that if a person is not happy with any incident, he is able to specifically use resources to solve those issues. However, resources do not only mean material resources, there is a whole classification of resources that can be used to succeed. Thus, we understand that in order to achieve the goal, participants of social



movements must use the resources rationally. Several types of resources that could help activists to achieve their set goals are listed below :

- Moral resources are characterized as support, for example, if an activist is member of a social movement who is pretty popular in the media, so he could solve some problem using his status
- Cultural resources. This type of resources can be classified as knowledge that can be used in the development of the movement or it can be considered as resources that are often used such as magazines or various videos that help to highlight major issues which encourage other people to join the movement
- Material Resources. In order to keep the movement going, it would most likely need capital or other assets, meaning that management of money resources or their transformation into assets of various types will serve to support the movement
- Human resources. This is the most obvious resource – people. But it is not so simple as it seems on the first glance. If people are described as ‘a resource’, then it means use of their work and skills should be distributed rationally. For instance, if a person is better versed in advertising, than in oratory skills, it is better to let him do what he can do best. Such phenomenon is also known as comparative advantage.
- Social organizational resources are the resources divided into 3 sub-key categories:
  - Infrastructure
  - Social networks
  - Organizations

Here we can assume that if access to infrastructure is very simple, such as access to the Internet, then access to social networks and public resources may be limited and difficult to access. (Bob Edwards and Patrick F. Gillham, 2013)

- 2) The theory of mass society is a complex theory that was revealed in the 20th century and focuses on people isolating from society. There is a group of people

who are deprived of social life or do not seek relatedness, that is, they are isolated from society. Against this background, people lose their sense of reality, they become easily manipulated. Therefore, the theory of mass society argues that such people can be easily manipulated by extremist organizations. When people feel socially alienated and an organization appears that gives a person hope that their society needs him, then a person is easily manipulated. (Steven M. Buechler, 2013)

- 3) The theory of deprivation is the theory that considers the dependence of one group on another, more specifically, this theory rather refers to the topic of inequality, and why social movements can appear based on it. There are 2 groups: the 1st group of people lacks some resource that is difficult for them to get and the 2nd group of people that possesses this resource. Thus, we can assume that 1st group of people would like to change their position. An example of the basic rights of feminist movements for the right to vote is provided further. On the one hand, women are in a group that is deprived of this right to vote, whereas, on the other hand, there is a group of men who possesses the resource. Based on such inequality, the movement was formed by a group of women due to the fact that they were willing to have a voting right at the same level as men did.

However, the efficiency of the theory is disputed, since to prove the factor of why in some cases the creation of movements does not occur (Sen, 2016)

### **3.2 Political Economy And Social Movements**

Having considered general types of social movements, we must move on to evaluation of movements using the political and economic sphere, since the basis of my research is a social movement that has an impact on the country's economy and political arena. Therefore, 7 ideas of Stanley and Goodwin (Jason Stanley and Jeffrey Goodwin, 2013) are proposed in order to help to understand and take a closer look at social movements from the standpoint of political economy:

- 1) The first idea asks us to pay attention to the material interests of the participants within the movements. But why is it important? Because common interests help people unite the groups for or against certain proposition. In this case, an example of boycotts for raising wages in any industry is given. People are united by a common material interest - raising wages. The fact that material interests can overlap some ideological ones is quite noticeable. First of all, it should be understood that a person always cares about his material interests, which are beneficial to him, but may not be beneficial to others
- 2) The second point gives a reason to think about the market system, because taking into account material interests, people want to earn more, but if we compare, for example, an enterprise such as cafe, where an owner receives a significantly larger amount of material wealth than the waiter, makes us think about inequality which entails negative emotions and conflicts of interest. Therefore, if we consider market relations as an example where a teacher earns more than a janitor, it is more likely that a janitor with a lower income would be the one among those who stand for a social movement which goal is to achieve higher salaries than a teacher who gets a relatively satisfactory wage.
- 3) The third point gives us an idea of why social movements with the same number of participants can be more or less effective. It all depends on the structural power that the participants of these movements possess. Some groups of people can make a much larger impact, which will be more sufficient than a group that does not have such opportunities. For instance, if doctors go on strike in a hospital, it would have much more crucial consequences, in contrast to cleaners who might have participated there too. Although they are related to the hospital, but they would contribute lower value to the movement.
- 4) In the fourth idea, a strong interest is devoted to competition. Competition between companies that entails seeking the maximum profit from the company, and of course workers will suffer from this. Why? Nowadays, there are many ways to reduce the cost of production, such as the use of robotics in assembly line production, or the transfer of production to a place where the wages of workers

will be lower - which also leads to discontent of the working class. However, it is not the only idea that stands behind the theory. It also explains the strategy, where in the conflict between companies, one of the companies can resort to an alliance with political forces, financing them in exchange for more favorable business conditions. The issue of political mobilization is also raised, when a movement enlists the support of one elite group in order to increase the chances of conflict with another group of elites.

- 5) In the fifth idea, the topics of competition of companies based on the crisis are raised and how social movements gain from it. Since the market economy brings booms and crises, it often happens that mass layoffs occur, which can exacerbate conflict, for example, movements that advocate for the issuance of jobs (movements against unemployment), as well as crises can cause conflicts between groups that both are vulnerable, as exemplified by anti-immigrant movements amid unemployment, as people are unhappy that immigrants are taking jobs that are almost non-existent. In addition, it describes the way the state, through military action, to revive the economy, due to the opening of foreign markets for trade, however, at the same time, anti-war social movements will appear that will have a reason to agitate their ideas, which can also lead to economic problems
- 6) The sixth idea describes the relationship of states with reformist movements and most likely this will affect the popularity of the ruling party. On the one hand, the state receives huge material benefits from private companies, but on the other hand, reformist movements usually demand something in exchange from which material support from the private sectors will decrease which may lead to a crisis that may lead to the emergency of other movements, possibly related to unemployment. That is, if the goal of the authorities is to maintain the economic stability of the state, they will most likely shy away from the reforms that social movements are trying to introduce. However, this does not mean that the authorities will shy away from reforms that will positively affect the economy.
- 7) In the seventh idea, political economy has a positive effect on the understanding of the collective personality, and according to this logic, collective personalities

perform collective actions. We were also shown that because of the manufacturing revolution, when a large number of large factories appeared, people were able to interact with the same people, while sharing similar experiences. They also showed us that capitalism allowed many collective personalities to open up, for example, the fact that during the development of capitalism and after the war people began to leave their homes, for example, in the countryside and began to move to new developed areas, and since the social circle expanded this led to more widespread cases of same-sex marriage and the formation of new collective identities

### **3.3 Economic Impact of Social Movements**

While looking at social movements through political economy prism, I also decided to look at how social movements affect the economies of the countries and corporations they oppose which is the goal of many movements - to influence politics and the economy in the hope of achieving an outcome that suits the activists of the movement. Hence, considering Giugni's article, I would like to talk about how movements affect the state and the overall market. Starting from the fact that I have already identified the types of social movements and their main goals, as an example I prefer to take a look at reformist movements that influence the state through various strikes. We can imagine situations that often take place in countries with developed industries and economies. Suppose that people work on a daily basis and receive average wages, but the rapid rise in inflation has a very strong effect on prices and, thus, on their salaries and many groups of people begin to notice that the state does not plan to do anything in the near future, and corporations are not in the position of people and they can arrange mass strikes at enterprises. Since we are considering a mass rally, the impact on the economy will be colossal, this spurs the state to decide faster and take anti-crisis measures for citizens, as citizens are gears in the mechanism of the economy, because the whole system will collapse without them. Otherwise, aggressive revolutionary-minded protest movements will affect the economy significantly. Their goal is no longer to force the state to take actions, but to make the state accept their ideology. Such protest movements, whether the state does not control them, can take various measures, if we recall the theory of mass social media, then such movements can recruit isolated people from who could already lose their sense of reality, they could be inspired by the ideological theories of the movement and they would become

its ardent supporters. If the movement does not hesitate to use violence, then people filled with and sincerely believing in the ideology of their movement can use violent methods. Provided that such a movement ceases to be controlled by the state, then a coup d'état may occur. During the coup d'état, a massive change of power occurs which also affects a possibility of ideology change within the state which will unequivocally change its economy. Giugni's article cites the Bolshevik Coup in 1917 as an example of such movements. Likewise, King and Pierce look at 3 ways in which social movements can interact with the market to change it:

- 1) Challenging corporations specifically
- 2) Creation of transnational private response systems
- 3) Creating alternatives in the market

In one way or another, each of these paths leads to reaching out the government or corporations to take actions. The question is also raised that if the state does not respond to protest movements, the assumption is made that if the state has little control over the market, mainly due to transnational trade, then the protesters will rather pay attention to corporations, or to the market itself, however, everything is not so simple as it seems to be. As transnational trade is an important source of income for many states, and many movements are sometimes against it and are in favor of regulating the market, companies will also unite to convince government officials that the policy is more than strict, market regulation may lead to a decrease in profits, which will dramatically change the economy of the country. Thus Balsiger identifies 3 types of social movement intrusion into the market:

- 1) Conation
- 2) Collaboration
- 3) Alternative niches

However, in our time, there is also a wide variety of media that can help social movements bring about change in the marketplace. Because it is a source of information for many people, the media works as a disseminator of information, so if protesters oppose a corporation, media coverage will help spread the news and

influence the company's status to other people. Even though this can lead to lower attractiveness of corporation for people or to a dramatic fall in stock price on stock market, these are thought to be inferior consequences. It all depends on factors such as exact reasons for the protests or scandals the corporation was noticed before. Thus, media coverage of a corporation in this light can cause enormous losses.

Also in the case of corporations and their profits, I distinguish boycotts and protest actions as very beneficial, since protests are often not only covered in the media, but also simply visible to ordinary residents. This is an excellent way to highlight the problem, as a result of which the reputation will be polluted and it might cause a decrease in the price of the shares of this corporation. In addition, boycotts are also an interesting way to attract attention, since the rejection of the goods that the company offers can seriously disrupt the economic situation which will also lead to changes in the economy. Perhaps this method is more aggressive, but the effectiveness of such methods should not be underestimated. (Giugni M., Maria T. Grasso, 2019)

### **3.4 Minimum Wages in US**

As the majority of terms and ideas were covered in the previous sections, I would like to discuss one of the most important topics of this work - minimum wages in the United States. Since the "fight for \$15" movement is positioning its main goal as to increase the minimum wage in all US states to \$15 per hour. The issue of the US minimum wage is then covered further. It was firstly introduced in 1938 during the Great Depression, it was done with an intention to distribute minimum salaries among all of the workers, since the competition on the market could be one of the reasons why employers lowered the wages deliberately based on their own personal preferences and interests. Another issue of child labor was also acute in the country (Kimberly Amado, 2022). Thus, since 1938, the minimum wage has increased on average every 5 years, thus the last minimum wage at the federal level was set in 2009 at a rate of \$7.25 per hour (U.S Department of Labor, 2020). What does the federal minimum wage mean in the US? As it turned out, there are actually 2 types of minimum wage in the US :

#### **1) Federal Minimum Wage**





### 3.5 Pros and cons of 15\$ Minimum Wage

According to the Democrats in the United States (Kimberly Amadeo, 2022), by 2025 it is planned to raise the minimum hourly wage to \$15 across America, but there is a lot of debate about raising the minimum wage among economists and scientists who are trying to understand how much an increase in the minimum wage would affect population or rather its employment. Pros and cons of raising the minimum wage can be found down below:

- 1) Moral Boost. It is quite obvious that when a person receives an increased salary, then his morale and external motivation will increase. Why is it good? The growth of morale affects the quality of work, because if you are paid a decent amount of money for work, he stops worrying about satisfaction of basic needs and can willingly work harder.
- 2) Stimulates economic growth. It means that if a person receives a relatively higher salary than before, then his purchasing power increases.
- 3) A worker is able to spend more time on education, because if he receives a salary sufficient enough to pay for housing and food, then he is be able to afford high quality education which may increase the chance that the stratum of the poor will decrease, because people will be able to find other jobs with higher salaries.
- 4) Reducing employee turnover. Since a salary will fit the employee, there is a higher chance that he will remain at his position and would not look for a higher paid job due to lack of funds. It would allow some businesses not to worry about frequent layoffs.

Disadvantages of raising minimum wage could be considered as following:

- 1) Job cuts. It is an absolute speculation due to which the increase in the minimum wage level may lead to higher unemployment rates. An enormous number of people could lose their jobs because companies will reduce their headquarters, as they can suffer bigger losses.
- 2) Outsourcing opportunity. It is expected that many companies will take into account the opportunity cost of employing a full time employee or paying other

organizations for similar job to be done with less capital spent in order to make a rational decision.

- 3) Increasing costs of living. If workers are paid higher salaries, it means that there is a possibility that prices will also increase, housing prices may rise as well. However, there are many other reasons on increased prices which are no covered in this thesis.

As advantages and disadvantages of higher minimum wages are explained, I looked for articles that would prove how raising the minimum wage would affect overall employment, but after scrutinizing a decent amount of articles, I realized that economists and scientists cannot unambiguously guess what the outcome would be. David Neumark and Peter Shirley (2021) state that after analyzing the literature they are convinced that the relative majority believe employment will decrease, but at the same time they doubt it by providing their own analysis as an example which could reflect the bias towards the trust issue. Also based on Kimberly Amadeo's article (2022), when asked if it is possible to live on the current minimum wage, she replies that the annual minimum wage before taxes is 15 thousand dollars, but the price of housing, where the average price for renting a one-room apartment is 19 thousand dollars. This correlation claims itself that the level of minimum wages is way below the poverty line.

## **4 Practical Part**

### **4.1 The Fight For 15 \$ Movement**

The purpose of the practical part of this thesis is to conduct an analysis of the ‘fight for 15 dollars’ movement, to understand what were the the activists’ drivers, reasons and interests and whether they achieved a set goal or they were destined to fail. For this research I decided to go through the documents analysis particularly I collect news headlines and articles in one way or another related to this movement and analyse the key aspects of the movement itself. First things first, I would like to emphasize key characteristics of this social movement. ‘Fight for \$15” movement initially originated in 2012 in New York, when several dozen workers went on a demonstration, because they were not satisfied enough by their wages, thus they demanded the minimum wage to be raised to \$15 per hour.

### **4.2 Motives**

#### Why did they go for it?

The answers of many people converge, their minimum wage which they received while working in the service sector such as fast food did not allow workers to live a life they were willing to live. It is also worth mentioning that one of the movement’s goals is to reducing the wage gap between women and men, as well as the coloured population. The participants of the movement also support the idea of elimination of sexism and racism at the economic level and certainly at the work place. 1938 became a year when Fair Labour Standards Act set a minimum wage threshold in order to protect workers during the Great Depression.

According to Dominic Ruche (2021), ‘In eight years, what became the Fight for \$15 movement has grown into an international organization that has successfully fought for a rise in minimum wage in states across the US, redefined the political agenda in the US, and acted as a springboard for other movements, including Black Lives Matter’. Fight for 15\$ movement has become a starting point for a dramatic change and a new beginning for further movements up to these days. People are not afraid to speak up and demonstrate their disagreement with a situation where they are desperate for bringing up justice as well as making themselves feel secure and free off

any limits they do not deserve being held into. The movement proved that people believe in a power of crowd, that they are able to achieve their goals whatever it takes to convinced authorities to act especially when it comes to people's freedom.

### **4.3 Tactics**

After 2012, the movement was supported in many other states and cities around the US. 'Crowding over the weekend into an expo centre in this suburb west of Chicago, many wore boldly lettered T-shirts proclaiming "We Are Worth More" and "Raise Up for \$15".' (Greenhouse, 2014). 'Once California and New York go, it is likely that more states will follow,' said Paul K. Sonn, general counsel of the National Employment Law Project, an advocacy group for low-wage workers' (Greenhouse, 2016). However, as we follow theoretical part of this thesis, we would remember that there are 2 actual types of minimum wages: federal minimum wage and the state minimum wage. For the matter of facts, the federal minimum wage has not changed since 2009. Then interesting thing came to my mind. As I said earlier, the movement at some point started to affect McDonald's board and others. Following the tendency, the movement grows and we can see that more and more areas of the population are impacted and are eager to join the movement, and so we can see that the course is also shifting to the government. Activists are trying to fight both the market and the government through protests, so I suppose that the movement currently has tremendous effect on politics. 'Fifty-nine percent of Americans, including 84 percent of Democrats and 58 percent of independents, support a \$15 minimum wage, according to a survey by the Public Religion Research Institute, a nonpartisan research group. Just 32 percent of Republicans do' (Greenhouse, 2016). Following the survey by the Public Religion Research Institute, a predominant part of Americans (59% ) are supporting a 'Fight for 15\$' movements, which is exactly the plan. The major aim is to make as many people interested as possible and gather the whole community in order to speak up for people's rights and freedom. Additionally, the movement is not about increased wages only. Much deeper values are involved into the social movement which brought up sexual and ethical issues too which I break down in further sections.

Basic-needs wage for selected cities, 2014-2020 (Metropolitan Statistical Areas, or MSA), by household type<sup>30</sup>

City (MSA)	Household	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Bakersfield, CA</b>	Single Adult	\$14.07	\$14.35	\$14.64	\$14.93	\$15.23	\$15.53	\$15.84
	With 1 Child	\$22.68	\$23.13	\$23.59	\$24.07	\$24.55	\$25.04	\$25.54
<b>Phoenix, AZ</b>	Single Adult	\$13.55	\$13.82	\$14.10	\$14.38	\$14.67	\$14.96	\$15.26
	With 1 Child	\$23.12	\$23.58	\$24.06	\$24.54	\$25.03	\$25.53	\$26.04
<b>Colorado Springs, CO</b>	Single Adult	\$12.93	\$13.19	\$13.45	\$13.72	\$14.00	\$14.28	\$14.56
	With 1 Child	\$23.93	\$24.41	\$24.90	\$25.40	\$25.91	\$26.42	\$26.95
<b>Houston, TX</b>	Single Adult	\$13.37	\$13.63	\$13.91	\$14.18	\$14.47	\$14.76	\$15.05
	With 1 Child	\$21.79	\$22.23	\$22.67	\$23.13	\$23.59	\$24.06	\$24.54
<b>Minneapolis, MN</b>	Single Adult	\$13.09	\$13.35	\$13.62	\$13.89	\$14.17	\$14.45	\$14.74
	With 1 Child	\$25.73	\$26.24	\$26.76	\$27.30	\$27.85	\$28.40	\$28.97
<b>Chicago, IL</b>	Single Adult	\$15.06	\$15.37	\$15.67	\$15.99	\$16.31	\$16.63	\$16.96
	With 1 Child	\$25.37	\$25.88	\$26.40	\$26.93	\$27.46	\$28.01	\$28.57

<b>Buffalo, NY</b>	Single Adult	\$13.48	\$13.75	\$14.03	\$14.31	\$14.60	\$14.89	\$15.19
	With 1 Child	\$24.85	\$25.35	\$25.86	\$26.37	\$26.90	\$27.44	\$27.99
<b>Baltimore, MD</b>	Single Adult	\$16.34	\$16.67	\$17.00	\$17.34	\$17.69	\$18.04	\$18.41
	With 1 Child	\$28.43	\$29.00	\$29.58	\$30.17	\$30.77	\$31.39	\$32.02
<b>Washington, DC</b>	Single Adult	\$20.25	\$20.65	\$21.07	\$21.49	\$21.92	\$22.36	\$22.80
	With 1 Child	\$37.82	\$38.58	\$39.35	\$40.14	\$40.94	\$41.76	\$42.60

*Table 1. Basic-needs wage for selected cities, 2014-2020, by household type.*

*Source: Metropolitan Statistical Areas*

As we can observe based on the table above, a single person on average requires \$15 by 2020, but we must always take into account constantly rising inflation rate, and if in 2012 such a sharp increase in the minimum wage seemed absurd to many people, now it seems to be an ordinary fact, especially considering how many states have now passed legislation to raise their minimum wages in their states. But this is not the most interesting thing. We can see that the need for money increases even more if a person has a child. Thus, we understand that even \$15 will be a significant increase compared to \$7.25, which is still considered acceptable in many states. Based on the article (Tung et al., 2015), I noticed that since the ‘fight for \$15’ movement has now become multi-industry and contains not only fast food workers, but also people who worked in other industries, 6 key types of work were identified in this article, which are highlighted in the article, but this does not mean that other areas are not affected by this problem. Let's take a closer look at them:

- Fast food. Perhaps the largest number of people who are in favor of higher wages are the fast food workers. It is claimed that around 96% of those working in this industry do not receive roughly \$15, therefore they are in social assistance funds.

Hourly earnings and unionization rates for workers in fast food			
	<\$15	Median wage	Union
<b>All front-line occupations</b>	<b>95 .9%</b>	<b>\$8 .25</b>	<b>1 .7%</b>
Cashiers	95.6%	\$8.25	
Combined food preparation and serving workers	96.1%	\$8.15	
Counter attendants	96.9%	\$8.16	

Table 2. Hourly earnings and unionization rates for workers in fast food

Source: NELP calculations from Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group files 2012-2014. Note: All wages reported in 2014 dollars.

- Retail. In the statistical analysis occupations such as movers, cashiers and salesmen are most often considered. The table below shows that around 80% of workers receive less than \$15 per hour, however, there are large chains that do raise at least \$1-2 today, but it's still critical.

Hourly earnings and unionization rates of front-line retail workers, by occupation			
	<\$15	Median wage	Union
<b>All front-line occupations</b>	<b>79 .9%</b>	<b>\$9 .94</b>	<b>5 .0%</b>
Retail Salespersons	71.2%	\$10.35	
Cashiers	90.3%	\$9.00	
Stock clerks and order fillers	83.7%	\$10.10	
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	80.2%	\$10.00	

Table 3. Hourly earnings and unionization rates of front-line retail workers, by occupation

Source: NELP calculations from Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group files 2012-2014. Note: All wages reported in 2014 dollars.

- Home care. Most often home care contains help with home and personal care. As an example you can take the elderly or disabled people who need help with everyday problems, the profession is considered to be in high demand, however 90% of people do not earn even 15 dollars an hour.

Hourly earnings and unionization rates of front-line home care workers			
	<\$15	Median wage	Union
<b>Home care workers</b>	<b>88 .6%</b>	<b>\$10 .00</b>	<b>10 .6%</b>

Table 4. Hourly earnings and unionization rates of front-line home care workers

Source: NELP calculations from Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group files 2012-2014. Note: All wages reported in 2014 dollars.

- Public catering and drinking establishments are considered separate from fast food in this article, but the results are no less depressing. For statistical analysis they took a huge number of professions from waiters and cooks to bartenders. Personally, I was surprised that 95% of cooks do not receive 15 \$ and their average tipping rate is only \$9.

Hourly earnings and unionization rates for front-line workers in all food service and drinking places, by occupation					
	<\$15	<\$15 with tips	Median wage	Median wage with tips	Union
<b>All front-line occupations</b>	<b>91 .6%</b>	<b>83 .8%</b>	<b>\$8 .53</b>	<b>\$9 .31</b>	<b>1 .7%</b>
Waiters and waitresses	92.5%	77.9%	\$8.00	\$10.00	
Cooks	91.2%	88.0%	\$9.26	\$9.56	
Cashiers	95.9%	93.7%	\$8.25	\$8.28	
Food preparation workers	94.1%	90.4%	\$9.00	\$9.18	
Other preparation and serving-related workers	94.8%	88.4%	\$8.28	\$8.80	



Bartenders	84.1%	64.7%	\$8.50	\$12.01
Hosts and hostesses, restaurant, lounge, and coffee shop	66.1%	61.5%	\$12.24	\$12.94
Chefs and head cooks	95.4%	89.8%	\$8.28	\$9.00
Dishwashers	94.9%	92.5%	\$8.67	\$8.80

Table 5. Hourly earnings and unionization rates for front-line workers in all food service and drinking places, by occupation

Source: NELP calculations from Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group files 2012-2014. Note: All wages reported in 2014 dollars.

- Auto-manufacturing. Judging by the table and the outgoing results, things are not as critical as with past industries, however, the article discusses that wages in the automotive industry have been falling for many years.

Hourly earnings and unionization rates for front-line auto-manufacturing workers			
	<\$15	Median wage	Union
<b>Miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators</b>	<b>45 .6%</b>	<b>\$15 .30</b>	<b>28 .7%</b>

Table 6. Hourly earnings and unionization rates for front-line auto-manufacturing workers

Source: NELP calculations from Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group files 2012-2014. Note: All wages reported in 2014 dollars.

- Child care. Nannies, people working in kindergartens and institutions where children are taken care of. We also see a critically high mark for people who are paid less than \$15 per hour for work, and childcare alone averages about 800,000 workers in the US.

Hourly earnings and unionization rates of front-line child-care workers			
	<\$15	Median wage	Union
<b>Child-care workers</b>	<b>85 .1%</b>	<b>\$9 .83</b>	<b>5 .7%</b>

Table 7. Hourly earnings and unionization rates of front-line child-care workers

Source: NELP calculations from Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group files 2012-2014. Note: All wages reported in 2014 dollars.

All the numbers that we see are not thousands or millions of workers, according to statistics, out of all workers in the US, as many as 42 percent receive less than \$15! Given this information, we can already believe that the movement's activists' demand to contribute \$15 as the federal minimum is quite fair, but not everything is as simple as it seems at first glance. It is also the goal of the movement to unite workers' unions, but considering the statistics, we can see that a very small number of people are in these unions, expect the auto-manufacturing workers.

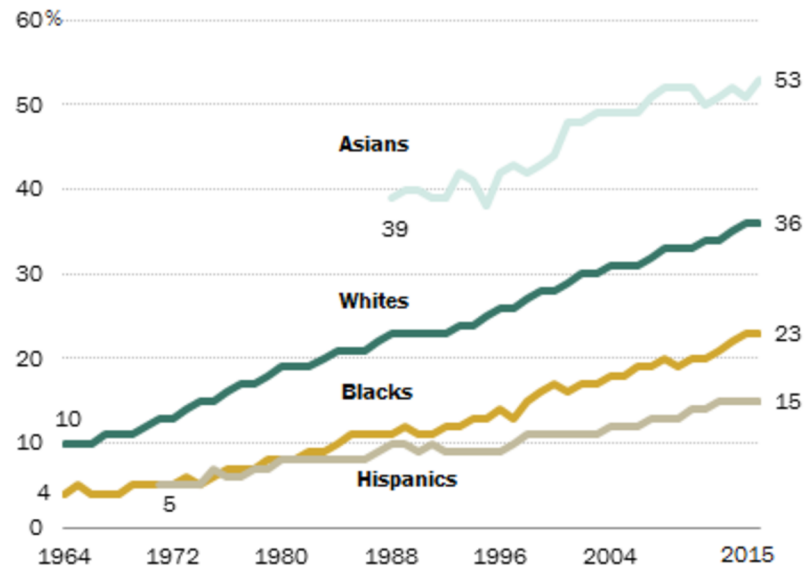
#### 4.4 Achievements

It is a fact that women are getting paid less than men, just as often as there are news in the US about domestic racism at work and that African Americans, Latinos and Asians have problems at work as well. Since the movement is fighting for a minimum wage for all workers, this means that it should not be based on gender, color or nationality, however, people have different opinions about the whole situation. So let's look at some statistics that will help us understand how successful the movement has been with the help of workers, including women, African Americans, Latinos and Asians. I decided to look at reasons and think about why African Americans earn less than white people? The answer may lie in the fact that many highly paid professions may require a diploma or some other higher education confirmation, one could even say that this is one of the most basic points why such a difference occurs. A corresponding study was found where the purpose of study is to figure out what percentage of the population among nationalities and skin colors is more likely to have at least one bachelor's degree. The outcome reveals that 16% of Hispanics and 23% of African Americans receive at least one bachelor's degree, while among whites, 36% receive it, and as much as 53 percent among Asians (Pew Research Center, 2019).

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## Whites more likely than blacks to have college degree

*% of U.S. adults ages 25 and older who have at least a bachelor's degree*



Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only those who reported a single race. Native Americans and mixed-race groups not shown. Data for whites, blacks and Asians from 1971 to 2015 include only non-Hispanics. Data for whites and blacks prior to 1971 include Hispanics. Data for Hispanics not available prior to 1971. Hispanics are of any race. Data for Asians not available prior to 1988. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Prior to 1992 those who completed at least 16 years of school are classified as having a bachelor's degree.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulation of the 1964-2015 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (IPUMS).

"On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites are Worlds Apart"

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

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*Figure 2. Whites more likely than blacks to have college degree*

*Source: Pew Research Center*

On the one hand, it seems that such a difference in percentage is not very significant, but I decided to check how many national groups there are in America, and most importantly, their proportion among all existing ones. I found out that in the USA the number of white people is equal to 76 percent, 13 percent of African American, around 18 percent of Hispanic and only 6 percent of Asians (United States Census Bureau, 2020).

Race and Hispanic Origin		United States
Population Estimates, July 1 2021, (V2021)		331,893,745
PEOPLE		
Race and Hispanic Origin		
White alone, percent		76.3%
Black or African American alone, percent (a)		13.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent (a)		1.3%
Asian alone, percent (a)		5.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent (a)		0.2%
Two or More Races, percent		2.8%
Hispanic or Latino, percent (b)		18.5%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent		60.1%

Figure 3. Population estimates

Source: Pew Research Center

This information speaks to the fact that the gap in percentages of people receiving education is really large starting from 0.2% up to 76%. However, these are not all the reasons. Everyday racism at workplace also have its effect. As it turned out, 21% of African Americans and 16% of Hispanics experience cases of discrimination in employment or problems with salaries. The same source presents that it is just as hard for women to work, for example, after a survey about a quarter of women confirmed that they had experienced gender discrimination that interfered with their work (Pew Research Center, 2013).

Considering the goals of the movement, we see that the main goal is to achieve a minimum wage of \$15, but we want to understand how this will affect racial differences in income. Is there a dependence of minimum wages on the general gap between races and nationalities. According to the statistics provided by Jesse Wursten and Michael Reich (2021), I do see a relationship between these 2 variables. It is also claimed that from 1990 to 2019 minimum wage increases have reduced racial wage disparities by 12 percent and are generally claimed to be showing marked gains in profits across all racial and gender groups, especially among African-Americans. population groups (Wursten and Reich, 2021). Also, to confirm this fact, the table down below shows the percentage of racial groups that make less than \$15. Following these percentages, I find it logical to say that minimum wages reduce the gender and racial wage gap.

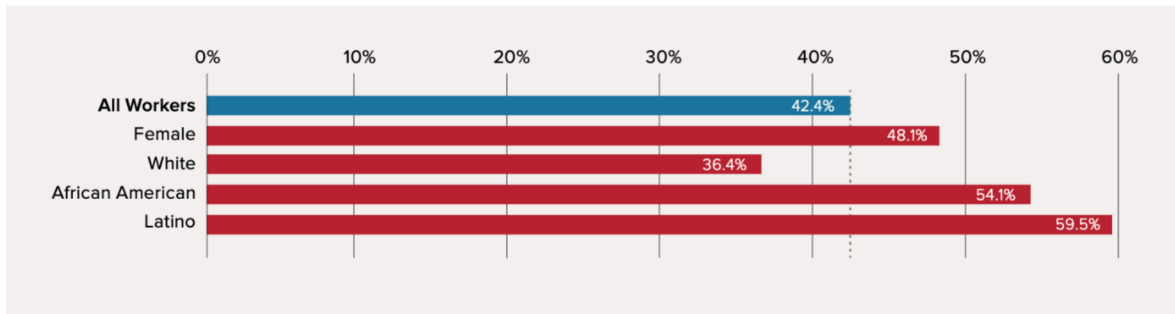


Figure 4. Ratio of workers making less than \$15 wage within each demographic group

Source: NELP Calculations from Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group files 2012–2014.

I would also like to emphasize the extent to which this movement was helpful and beneficial among the population. We can see how many people have already been helped by movement as well as their statistics for each nationality. In addition, the article says that in total the movement has already helped 26 million people and received \$150 billion in additional income, which is 94 times the additional income that was in 2009 with the increase in the minimum wage to \$7.25, the authors of the article say. Just looking at the additional income for each individual is a pretty large increase in additional per capita income (Lathrop et al., 2021).

Race or Ethnicity	Number of Affected Workers	Additional Annual Income (Aggregate)	Additional Annual Income (per Worker)	Share of Workforce Affected (%)
White	11,237,000	\$55,458,000,000	\$4,900	22.7
Black	2,190,000	\$11,159,000,000	\$5,100	29.8
Latinx	6,140,000	\$38,361,000,000	\$6,300	43.9
Asian American	1,450,000	\$9,115,000,000	\$6,300	25.8
<b>Total (Worker of Color)</b>	<b>9,770,000</b>	<b>\$58,640,000,000</b>	<b>\$5,900</b>	<b>33.2</b>
<b>Total (All Workers)</b>	<b>21,630,000</b>	<b>\$117,280,000,000</b>	<b>\$5,400</b>	<b>27.6</b>

Notes: Figures are rounded and may not add up to total. For the purpose of this analysis, the District of Columbia is treated as a state. Due to small sample size, impacts for multi-racial and Native American workers could not be reliably estimated and are not separately reported. Source: Authors' analysis of American Community Survey 1-Year (2011) public use microdata.

Figure 5. Impact of the Fight for \$15, by Race or Ethnicity, 2012-2021 (state)

Race or Ethnicity	Number of Affected Workers	Additional Annual Income (Aggregate)	Additional Annual Income (per Worker)	Share of Workforce Affected (%)
White	805,000	\$5,800,000,000	\$7,200	25.4
Black	334,000	\$2,430,000,000	\$7,300	40.7
Latinx	1,457,000	\$12,020,000,000	\$8,300	57.0
Asian American	351,000	\$2,870,000,000	\$8,200	34.2
<b>Total (Workers of Color)</b>	<b>2,140,000</b>	<b>\$17,330,000,000</b>	<b>\$7,900</b>	<b>44.0</b>
Total (All Workers)	3,032,000	\$23,700,000,000	\$7,800	39.0

Notes: Figures are rounded and may not add up to total. Local figures by race or ethnicity refer to estimates for the nine localities in our analysis for which data is available in the American Community Survey. These localities are: Cook County, IL (except Chicago); Chicago, IL; Los Angeles County, CA (including the city of Los Angeles); Oakland, CA; Pasadena, CA; San Francisco, CA; Denver, CO; Minneapolis, MN; and Seattle, WA. Due to small sample size, impacts for multi-racial and Native American workers could not be reliably estimated and are not separately reported. Source: Authors' analysis of American Community Survey 1-Year (2011) public use microdata, and 3-Year (2010-2012), or 5-year (2009-2013) summary data.

Figure 6. Impact of the Fight for \$15, by Race or Ethnicity, 2012-2021 (local)

#### 4.5 Commentary

Summing up, I would like to consider what people say about the campaign as well as who supports or otherwise does not support this movement and consider the reasons that people give. For example, Jonathan Rosenblum (2017) dedicated an entire article to a detailed analysis of the movement. He cites the opinions of some other scientists. For example, he says that the very long-awaited salary change of \$15 is not a living wage in many areas and also that a desperate desire to introduce a bill on \$15 should rather be the starting point of the movement towards fair pay in America. Although many workers are on strike, they are still employed by a company, that is, in relation to McDonald's it is not a strong leverage on the company, since it states that the activists do not rather want to cause any economic painful issues to the company by simply being fired or not returning to work, but they are trying to exhaust companies by relying on the public, that is, this is more of a political protest.

In his article, Stephen Greenhouse (2016) argues with other scientists such as David Neumark who claims that employment among the population with low qualifications is 5-10%, but still believes that a minimum wage of \$15 will have a more positive effect than a negative one, whereas Michael Reich, according to 'How the \$15 minimum wage went from laughable to viable' article by S. Greenhouse, stated that such changes will certainly affect the automation of work in some

enterprises, but will have little effect on jobs, in addition to what he believes that this will positively affect purchasing power, which will cover the negatives that may be.

Regarding comments from fast food industry representatives, Frances O'Donnell who owns Buffalo Wings & Rings, said that this bill would increase his payroll costs by 25% and that it would destroy his business. (Greenhouse, 2014)

The Chipotle (2021) company, which has restaurants all over America, said that it would increase its wages to \$15, which I'm sure had a positive effect on its employees (Chipotle, 2021)

Even McDonald's, against which there were massive protests all over the country, announced that it plans to raise the minimum wage to \$15 by 2024 (Marx, 2021).

The co-founder of Burger King, David Edgerton, thinks that the policy of such a minimum wage increase could destroy the cheap menu in his restaurants, since, logically, he would have to make up for the increase in wage costs, according to a Time news headline (Feeney, 2015)

Senator Bernie Sanders, who is a Democrat, has also spoken out in favor of raising wages to \$15, expressing sincere sympathy for the current situation in the US, calling it a crisis, and saying that he sincerely wants to help achieve the \$15 federal minimum wage (Greenhouse, 2021)

Also, one of the most interesting statements was made by Joe Biden, one of whose main election promises was to raise the minimum wage of \$15 at the federal level, and since he is now the president of the US, it means that the goals of the \$15 fight movement are supported by the president (Joe Biden for President: Official Campaign Website).

The organization also actively supports the fight for \$ 15 movement and invested more than 30 million (Connor Gundersen).

The movement is also supported by Mary Kay Henry personally spoke out to support the movement. (Taylor K., 2019)

## 5 Results and Discussion

Having conducted an investigation on social movements, I did not think that I could reach such important discoveries. The further I researched the movement, the more I realized that not everything is as simple as it might seem in reality. I think a lot of people would like to support such kind of movements, because it's chasing issues that endanger the economic health of Americans. I saw that the organization has achieved a colossal success, just imagining that the strike in 2012 of fast food workers would have grown into a movement involving thousands of people who would fight both corporations and states at the same time. Just as surprising is the fact that the social movement grew as their forces accumulated, the original task was to increase the minimum wage at McDonald's and other fast food restaurants, and after supporting the fight for 15 dollars by people and companies, they received the power that they used to raise salaries in the states and cities, but if the social movement had stopped there - now they're pushing for the federal minimum wage with the backing of the president himself, I think the shifting focus of the \$15 brawl as the movement grows is really amazing - a lot of social movements have one stable a goal such as a coup or revolution (there could be hundreds of examples), but here we see an example of how a \$ 15 fight evolves and changes, acquiring new goals as it grows - and it's amazing. This is definitely a protest movement, because it pursues exactly the same methods as its reliance on public opinion and shows open protests and boycotts, but even though the movement is a protest, it pursues completely reformist ideas - raising the minimum wage up to 15\$. The consequences of this movement are meaningful and pretty significant. More than 150 billions of extra income for workers who earn less than \$15 were allocated, helping more than 26 million people. The numbers are truly impressive.

In addition, the goal of the movement was to reduce the wage gap between gender and racial groups which affects the economy of the country in a positive as well as in a negative way too. On the one hand, the issue of job loss is still open, companies are forced to cut jobs due to their inability to pay all salaries to all employees in full amount, especially considering higher rates which, on the other hand, should be assumed as success for activists and, unfortunately, an obstacle for enterprises. Considering how many politicians have commented on the law on raising the minimum wage, it is worth saying that the movement has achieved great results on the political



arena as well as in economic matter. Let's also remember the 4 stages of the movement. Given the current situation with the movement and the fact that the result of \$15 in many states has not yet been achieved, I suppose that the movement has not ended yet and is currently at the stage 3 - the heyday of the movement. I express confidence and believe that the movement would proceed to move forward and, considering other issues if it succeeded, with the social, economic and political support it has.

## 6 Conclusion

To summarize, the main objective of this thesis was to investigate the ‘Fight for 15\$’ movement and to analyze their job, success in achieving primary goals as well as impact on economics and ideologies through political economic analysis. Throughout the research I deeply explained key characteristics of social movements including its 4 basic types and stages in the literature review. Several social movements theories were also taken into account. Moreover, minimum wages in US were observed and general comparison of minimum wages by states was provided too. Practical part in turn obtains a detailed politic econometric analysis of documents such as articles, scientific papers and news. Major idea of movement’s motives and goals, tactics and strategies and finally achievements and other comments was revealed along the way.

I found a lot of unexpected things about the ‘fight for \$15’ movement that turned my view of the movement over and over again. The more articles and news headlines I read, the more I realized that the goal towards which the movement is moving is extremely far away from 100% completion. It is hard to say whether the movement has achieved at least 50% of intended goals or there is still a room and potential for further improvements. Firstly, most of the states in US still haven't changed their state minimum wage, which means people will likely wait either for states to change their minds or for the federal salary to reach its \$15 goal, but despite Biden himself supports this idea, it could also mean a lot of things might change as the federal minimum increase by 2025 as scheduled. I would also like to speculate about how many people the movement helped. Roughly 26 million people and 150 billion in additional income, which really shows the scale that this movement has done over the past 10 years. Does it mean any positive economic results are present? Definitely yes.

Another interesting goal of the movement is assumed to be the way of gap reduction between the salaries of different racial groups where they had a chance of success, which also has a huge economic impact. As for fast food restaurants and other various establishments that raise the minimum wage throughout the country, this is also an unambiguous positive result of the activities of this social movement.

## 7 References

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